I hope my packet for Mr Edward Upward's (what a name!) book won't be dotty — but it was very difficult to do anything that wasn't.

Jan 8 1938

Your & Angelica's many nice letters which we are handily needing — letters to me are needed badly however — Here the ice-skating is a sore with thick snow outside — but all the same the sun shines in — quite a different way to last winter — Dazzling & dazzling. I wonder if you have seen Quentin & heard all his news since. Not that there much to hear — Very vivid — the Manning has been the principal thing — otherwise he (and a very quiet life. We see no one at all except the Bells. Sometimes we go to Marseilles to do a little shopping with Lydia. But it has really been so cold lately that one has avoided going out at all except errands — as the car has open one window and side-screens & so one gets rather frozen — Julian has heard much Quentin about his adventure together. / Next day / Last night we were frightened in a car [illegible] really we were so cautious that there was no great danger — You needn't be afraid that we shall venture alone again in the forest by night —

Our visit to Rheims

was very interesting & I was there for the first time in their own surroundings for more than an hour or two. It an extraordinary life. Marie was at home having holidays. We lived entirely in the kitchen & she did all the cooking, making delicious dishes apparently with no trouble or hurry. Keeping up a flow of talk all the time. I think in better weather it might be a perfect existence of its kind - but in the icy cold it had its drawbacks. One could not sit anywhere except by the stove in the one room - mine bedroom was an ice box simply - So one was never alone - not only was she always with the Maurins, but her family would constantly appear at the door & come in & settle down for hours simply to talk. Probably it was worse at the New Year than it would be generally. But I found that rather trying. Then the cold really was painful as 3 doors opened out of the kitchen, two of them into the open air - the WC was outside, & also washing up also was done outside - for the door was constantly being opened - Hot water of course was a great luxury only the hotel once a day & baths did not exist - It was painful going to bed with no light by which to undress so that one had to get out again

(185ii)

with the cold to turn it out if one so made that one has to read in bed. However I know that it is only old age creeping on that makes one prunelle at these discomforts. But I rather wondered how Roger stood them. But probably he was nearly always free in the summer. The Mannings themselves were charming & very kind hospitable — Charles had practically finished the introduction & Quentin translated it, afterwards slipping through it with me & again with me & Charles trying to see it was very exact — Charles knows English really very well although I don't think he speaks it very easily — But he reads it & knows every word & any kind that may crop up — & Quentin knows French very well — so I hope the result will do justice to Charles' exact meaning. He took an enormous amount of trouble about it.

I had a short letter from Maynard. His handwriting has become almost illegible from shakiness. But I suppose he writes by dictation. How grossly overworked (to judge) I heard from Helen, who however is always overworked. That Desmond had been very ill with asthma & bronchitis & that Molly was back & there an operation — How is Leonard?

Helen in the whole seemed terribly cheerful. I think that awful party has nearly done for her, but she said she had recovered

whether it did any good to the school & dont
know what treat seems to be ahead. To give
succeeded in getting me an increase stipend for
about £105 a year & income absent guarantee
the remainder of the rent, so they've taken it
& should think they'd be pretty sure to be able
to pay it without calling on the guarantors.
We return (expect about the 16th or
17th. Very soon now. Psychics term
begins on the 20th & our return tickets
think come to an end about the 16th so
it won't be worth while extending them for
another few days. So you will soon
hear me on your phone almost as soon as
you return to London yourselves I suppose.
Our tenant at the Bosphore is leaving in 3
months time & the Feeds want us to take it
again. I don't know what to do as it
seems a difficult time to come here for long enough
now to be worth while - We still have a lot
of furniture here & could make it habitable
again - but it might be better to try to let -
Please write & tell me what happening to you & how
you both are & all the news of the town & country.
We hardly ever even see a paper here - which is really a
great relief - It's not as if the world doesn't get on quite as
well without our help & I suppose we would keep anything
really terrific - Love VB

T. PARSONS 3.2.73

[illegible] 1938

I was very glad to hear through [illegible]
had had a letter from Clive, rather [illegible]
talking as if Edward were on his deathbed & ill.
[illegible] was difficult to make out what was the matter.
[illegible] there & then. Clive [illegible] with
[illegible] party, the doctor's questions necessary
[illegible] seeing he was walking every day. He sounds
[illegible] as if we shall be back very
[illegible] — on Monday I think.
We shall [illegible] on Sunday & spend Monday
night in Paris, which I believe we, very keen
[illegible] Clive, rather fortunately from Duncan
but quite [illegible] their dog & it [illegible]
the only place in which a few days or he could
spend a few days in Paris — he & Vanessa
[illegible] with Angelica! I [illegible] no doubt will
be very warm & comfortable after [illegible]
I rather dread returning to the crowds, the school
& all its difficulties etc. One has absolutely
no responsibilities here & feels unstrung with
[illegible] we [illegible] realize [illegible] why one [illegible].
[illegible] & especially to
[illegible] Stephen Tennant & Sir Harry
Lauder [illegible] Duncan sorry
that he has to [illegible] from [illegible]
[illegible] It is [illegible] than anything.
[illegible]

has even been able to paint out of doors since we
twice which takes all one could hope to do in
England in January. Angelica paints too sometimes
paints & lets orders making & seems to enjoy life
In the evenings we have dined, cooled by Jean,
with the Colmers. She doesn't cook dinner. We
usually arrive in about half way through & sits &
talks to us. They (the Mistrics of Cassis life
which you would enjoy) are selling out fast
with the new position of everyone since we were
last here. The Crothers household has changed now
The two lovely daughters have both married & live in
England, Mrs Crothers is dead, rather unluckily,
& Pa Crothers now lives alone in the house & is
said to be very solitary - especially as he can't even
read a newspaper, still less a book & amuse
himself in any way alone - To think that he
was one of 20 children & started life with a good
job of £1000 a year - But he was so stupid he
was turned out. Then Mr Robinson whose wife ran
away with 3 Lesbians & left him alone (to
those are the only English left in the colony - Miss
Brown of La Gôlatte is the only person who has asked
Duncan to tea - She comes of a surprising family, one
of her sisters being also an unmarried Miss Brown
but the mother of several other Miss Browns & one of
her sisters having married another Miss Brown - Miss
Brown the mother was called herself Mrs Brown also
& thought very tactless & difficult of her. Then

pity you can't come to your house. It all looks so spruce now with its terraced garden – like one warm & sunny & windless place in all London. If you hear of anyone who'd like to borrow it for this summer – I believe we might get £7 or £8 a week – they say it's very much improved & has a gas geyser in the bath & new floors & an archway between my room & the drawing room, which makes it into one good large room. There's enough left of the furniture to make it comfortable.

In the last long rambling letter I had from Helen she said that the young men had taken the big studio in the Euston Road – as a result of Hamlet & Palmers having guaranteed the rent. But – I think that would have happened without any party. In the future I shall object strongly to any party ever being given with a view to making money. It's always a failure, I believe, & it would be much better to give the money spent on the party. Hilaire hoped that all traces of it will be over by the time we return & Florrie be able to come & cook for us again. Never have I known such a tempest as those last days in London.

I hope you're being sensible & taking care not to collapse yourself – it would be very agitating being at the end of the telephone &

1

public & High Walpole & Eltoe with the intervals
you might possibly send me a card to
three de Lunes & say that Leonard is sure
him my love - / with ring you up when
we get back, some time on Monday evening
This is a very dull long letter but what
can you expect when one leads such an
inane existence, reading but the most part only
the carving literature one finds in Jane's
book shelves, which reminds me of the sort of
thing one used to find in Lunes the Castle
but the Lunes hotel as we feel like the
children upstairs too, in our tower room, where
we hear a good deal of the town upstairs movements
downstairs, but only once down ourselves in
the evenings. Visitors are few except when
Vanessa & Duncan & Bell & Ice who it is
the strange rooms we have only to do with
them. I must leave off now, up by work
in London if I find I have any left.

Yours

(1938)

Fontainemore

Jan '3

Oh dear, oh dear what a time it does take
you. Now listen. I may seem weak and mild &
sweet as honey but even so repeated requests will
turn at last (as it is to be specially feared that
they will) however many more patients you
re-accept in America where of such
ill-paid jams are tried their way the-
-I see that quite contemptuously if I throw
my cheque into the fire. Nevertheless I
retain - but it is (as I said) time - After many
brights will rise after this - Accordingly
- each (the) next time necessary I accept donations to
new clothing coupons (& money with the
like) either arbitrarily as seems it best like it - which
case no doubt - I shall reap a pretty penny -
But that would be a different story - or stories -
So please be sensible at last -
It was a great relief to get your letter
- otherwise - I do hope this illness is at last -
quite Ray seems to be certain & touched no
ill effects (we will see (and (as I hope) natural good
reason - Another of your letters (with their row)
was mainly (already) dictated. I see we never have
[illegible] back upon - & though Helen
short light female seemed (unlike the dismal
[illegible] time - really scientific - it was all super-
work. Ray at least seems. It was definite test
However I hope no one will waste a distinguished

We made [illegible] back very comfortably by the aero-dynamique train which only takes [illegible] to Paris [illegible] we shall spend Sunday night at [illegible] & have a very good dinner & [illegible] start journey back on Monday [illegible] - I think another - must have gone astray - did only hear yesterday Rodmell & the Monk Sundays & start me - Angelica had measles & thought would be sure to see Quentin & bring him back with her want [illegible] to hear. Our adventure was very [illegible] when [illegible] & drove to Marseilles & missed Duncan the cars lights went out & we had to grope along [illegible] in pitch darkness which was rather nerve racking. But we did it safely & as Duncan did not arrive till 2 days later no harm was done. Quentin has all Charles's MS & other things - I mean the two answers - & I intend he is getting the translation typed now & hope it will all be ready by the time I get back. I expect we shall see Clive in Paris & hear news from him. I'll ring you up on Monday morning

I'd [illegible] like to have derived a light from the stone that contained America

1938

8, Fitzroy Street,
W.1.
Museum 5596.

Jan 25

This is a humble birthday present
to wish you many happy returns
you cannot complain of my
spending money on you as these
earrings were brought back
by Julian – but if you like
them I want you to have them

VB

? 4 Feb. 1938

8 FITZROY STREET, W.1.

You do know really don't you how much you help me — I can't show it & I feel so stupid & such a wet blanket often but I could not get on at all if it weren't for you — so you must not mind my being or seeming so grumpy — I really ought not to see outsiders yet, I'm so incapable at dealing with them —

It's stupid to mind ~~do~~ dates, but it — this me I can't help thinking of

Yours VW